

Books and the People Who Make Them

THE Macmillan Company is publishing five books on immortality, of which one, with the title *Immortality*, is a blend of scientific, psychical and Biblical research. The authors are B. H. Streeter, C. W. Emmet, A. Clutton-Brock and J. A. Madfield. The others are: *Can We Believe in Immortality?* by J. H. Snowden; *This Life and the Next*, by P. T. Forsyth; *The Resurrection of Our Lord*, by W. Milligan, and *The Assurance of Immortality*, by H. E. Fosdick.

A little catalogue just put out by D. Appleton & Co. describes the firm's reference books, encyclopedias, dictionaries and books for the study of foreign languages. This house specializes in Spanish language books. Besides three books for beginners in Italian, we notice three for students of Portuguese. It seems to be forgotten that on the western front American troops may easily be in contact with Portuguese units.

D. Appleton & Co. are publishing a new romance by Agnes and Egerton Castle, called *Minniglen*. It is about England in war time. They are also publishing *Uncle Abner*, by Melville Davisson Post, which is all about a stern old Virginian whom crime never baffles.

Will Levington Comfort's *The Hive* will be published this month by George H. Doran Company.

George H. Doran Company are publishing the third volume of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's *The British Campaign in France and Flanders*.

Ralph D. Paine, author of *The Fighting Fleets*, published by Houghton Mifflin Company, was introduced at his lecture in Boston on June 25 by Rear Admiral Spencer S. Wood. Mr. Paine, who spent five months with the allied fleets on active service, after having been especially selected for the work by the Government, tells in his book and his lectures of the work which is being done by the allied navies. Mr. Paine tells the following story about Admiral Bayly, the British naval commander, under whose direction the American flotilla is operating. Admiral Bayly, he says, has endeared himself to officers and men alike by his strictness, combined with absolute justice and a sense of fair play. "Bayly once signalled to an English port the request that a flotilla of his own destroyers be sent to him for some special service. They arrived, but when he ordered them to sea again they delayed because of a furious gale that raged outside. Thereupon Sir Lewis Bayly sent them home again. The senior officer at the English base courteously signalled: 'Sorry the destroyers were not of much use to you.' Back from Ireland flashed this brief reply: 'Why say much?'"

The following is from *The New Revelation*, by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, published by George H. Doran Company:

"Upon April 4 of last year, 1917, I awoke with a feeling that some communication had been made to me of which I had only carried back one word which was ringing in my head. That word was 'Piave.' To the best of my belief I had never heard the word before. As it sounded like the name of a place I went into my study the moment I had dressed and looked up the index of my Atlas. There was 'Piave' sure enough, and I noted that it was a river in Italy some forty miles behind the front line, which at that time was victoriously advancing. I could imagine few more unlikely things than that the war should roll back to the Piave, and I could not think how any military event of consequence could arise there, but none the less I was so impressed that I drew up a statement that some such event would occur there, and I had

Dear Sirs

Being especially interested in your comments on South American stories in a late Book World, I wanted to write and say how much I enjoy that section of the Sunday paper. The Illustrated supplement & the Book Review are all that we get. But it keeps us in touch with civilization, and as we can't have public libraries and book stores near at hand, we use the Book World judgment in ordering out volumes to read. We rarely find fault with the comments when we have finished. Thank you.

June 4. 1918

RECEIVED

MIDNIGHT
THE SUN

Sincerely yours

Wilhelm Jones

Instituto Ingles

Santiago de Chile

it signed by my secretary and witnessed by my wife with the date, April 4, attached. It is a matter of history how six months later the whole Italian line fell back, how it abandoned successive positions upon this stream which was said by military critics to be strategically almost untenable. If nothing more should occur (I write upon February 20, 1918), the reference to the name has been fully justified, presuming that some friend in the beyond was forecasting the coming events of the war. I have still a hope, however, that more was meant, and that some crowning victory of the Allies at this spot may justify still further the strange way in which the name was conveyed to my mind."

Grace Fallow Norton, the poetess who translated the letters of the young French officer of a French tramp steamship which make up the *Odyssey of a Torpedoed Transport*, published by the Houghton Mifflin Company, says in her preface: "He said in anguish, 'All we shall have for our funeral oration will be silence everywhere.' But he had already written his own epitaph and that of his brave companions: 'You know what professional honor is.'" The last quoted phrase occurs in one of the letters to his friend, in which the author speaks of parting from his wife: "What a profession ours is! Life seems so beautiful—one launches into it like a ship on the sea. But when, to support a wife you adore, you have to earn a living at the price of never being with her—it's the worst of all. Yesterday at the station she went and I was left on the platform. She implored me to be prudent, to save myself if the Pamir should sink, to forget my *amour propre* and that I was an officer and to think of her! I swore! But you know what professional honor is. I knew I was lying. I knew that if the catastrophe came, the sailor would supplant the husband. What an atrocious parting." The *Odyssey* has been called in France "the most important war book of 1917."

News has just come from Los Angeles that Maurice McLoughlin, world champion tennis player, whose *Tennis as I Play It* is a standard volume, and who is now on one of Uncle Sam's cruisers, recently married a young woman of Pasadena, Cal.

Mary Smith Churchill, author of *You Who Can Help* (Small, Maynard & Company) is the wife of Lieut.-Col. Marlborough Churchill, the newly appointed censor for the army.

These Englishmen authors have a singular and entertaining way about them in concealing their identities under pseudonyms as fanciful in effect as the names of American Pullman cars. There, for instance, is the humorous "Artemus," sportive observer of the ways of men and women in war time, author of *The Book of Artemus*. Then again we have "Taff-rail," a British naval man, who writes sea yarns, author of *The Sub*, and "Bar-timeus," another British naval man, author of *A Tall Ship* and, more recently, *The Long Trick*. "Ajax," whose book, *The German Pirates: His Methods and*

Record, just published by George H. Doran Company, is, it seems, otherwise Prof. W. M. Dixon of the University of Glasgow.

Boni & Liveright have undertaken the publication of the best works of Ambrose Bierce in single volumes. Heretofore it has only been possible to buy Ambrose Bierce in a ten volume set, variously bound, at either \$25, \$60 or \$100 a set. The first volume that has just come from the press of Boni & Liveright is *In the Midst of Life* (tales of soldiers and civilians). This volume contains some of Bierce's very best stories, those of the American civil war being particularly timely at this moment. The next volume Bierce's present publishers will issue will be *Can Such Things Be?*

Practically everybody knows of the mystery that has surrounded Bierce's life. Nothing has been heard of Bierce since he so dramatically disappeared in 1914. At that time it was rumored that he had joined Villa's forces in Mexico, and every few months another rumor spreads, locating Bierce anywhere from Petrograd to Patagonia. The other day, in speaking of Bierce, Gertrude Atherton, who says that he is the greatest writer of English the United States has produced, with the possible exception of Henry James, remarked that she recently heard from three "authoritative" sources that Bierce was doing special work for the British General Staff, was special military adviser to the Mikado of Japan and had been killed in Gallipoli. Other people say that he is hale and hearty in Paris at 76, and has placed his military knowledge, gained in the civil war, at the disposal of the French Government.

But it is certain that no author of the last decade has been so much discussed by the men and women who have made the literature of the world during the past fifty years. Few great living authors may say that they have been uninfluenced by Ambrose Bierce. He himself humorously said in reference to his lack of recognition:

"My, how my fame rings out in every zone, A thousand critics shouting, 'He's unknown!'"

But in spite of this lack of general recognition such men as Henry Irving, Austin Dobson and Clement Scott tell of how Bierce, then writing under the pseudonym of Dod Grile, stirred London thirty years ago as no writer has done since the days of Swift. Joel Chandler Harris once said: "If I were Santa Claus I'd put into the hands of every intelligent man and woman in the United States an edition of Ambrose Bierce's remarkable stories of soldiers and civilians." Elbert Hubbard once said: "Ambrose Bierce is the boss of us all. Ambrose can do without us. We cannot do without him and still have the sunshine and the shade. He knows life in its every phase." Owen Wister tells us: "Some of the things that Bierce writes are wonderful—a work of genius, in fact." William Marion Reedy, who has discovered so many Americans and who has helped to rediscover many more, writes: "You cannot resist the lure of his style, simple, lucid, nervous, compact, his unerrant selection of the right word, his way of saying ex-

actly what he means, nor less, nor more." Arthur Brisbane, whom some of us know as the highest paid author in America, says: "Ambrose Bierce is one of the best writers in America, perhaps the best." So it would seem that he is a prophet not without honor in his own country, and that he is also appreciated in England as are few American authors other than Poe and Hawthorne. Conan Doyle considers him America's master of weird tales. Arthur Machen says that *In the Midst of Life* is one of the very best collections of short stories ever printed.

Bierce's present publishers do not feel that his work is of an even merit, agreeing in this with such critics as H. L. Mencken and Gertrude Atherton, who say that half of Bierce should be forgotten. It is their purpose to publish the four or five volumes which entitle him to his place as one of the few great American story tellers.

Percy James Brebner's sequence of detective stories, *Christopher Quarles*, which E. P. Dutton & Company first published in the United States nearly four years ago, has been selling so steadily ever since that they have just brought out the third edition. Brebner is an English author with nearly a score of novels to his credit. He began adult life with the intention of being a stock broker, but after a short time turned to writing fiction. He has always been interested in the work of hospitals and has written much about it. His *Christopher Quarles* is a queer old professor of philosophy who aids a young detective in solving mysterious crimes. A love story runs through the sequence of tales.

E. P. Dutton & Company say that Donald Hankey's two volumes of articles descriptive of the life, thought and feeling of men at the front, *A Student in Arms*, of which the first series was published a year and a half ago and the second a few months later, continue to sell steadily. More than 60,000 copies have been bought in this country.

Take Notice!!!

Where is Ambrose Bierce? He disappeared in 1914. A large reward for information leading to his discovery.

IN THE MIDST OF LIFE

(Tales of Soldiers and Civilians)
BY AMBROSE BIERCE

According to Gertrude Atherton, Conan Doyle, Owen Wister, Arthur Brisbane, etc., this is the best or one of the best collections of short stories ever written.

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